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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [KDEM](#) [IZ](#)  
SUBJECT: SECURITY IN MAYSAN PROVINCE DETERIORATES

REF: A) BASRAH 142; B) BASRAH 158

CLASSIFIED BY: Ken Gross, Regional Coordinator, REO Basrah,  
Department of State.  
REASON: 1.4 (b)

[¶1.](#) (U) Summary: In an October 12 meeting between Maysan contact Abdul Kareem Mahod (Abu Hatem) and the Regional Coordinator (RC) at the REO, the discussion centered on the deteriorating security situation in Maysan. Violence and assassinations have markedly increased since the departure of Coalition Forces from Camp Abu Naji at the end of August. Before the province can be turned over to Iraqi control, the security forces must be cleaned out, he said. The overall situation is worsening and he believes that the United States must lend its support to moderate and independent groups in order for change. He stated that with employment, militia membership would dwindle because membership is mainly seen as a source of income to many. End summary.

[¶2.](#) (C) Leader of Maysan's Noble Council, Abdul Kareem Mahod (Abu Hatem) lamented Maysan's deteriorating security situation during a meeting with the RC and poloff on October 12. Abu Hatem reiterated his belief previously shared with the RC (Ref B) that Maysan was not ready to transition to Provincial Iraqi Control (PIC). He told the RC that since their last meeting on August 31, the security situation in Maysan has markedly worsened. He said that since the withdrawal of Coalition Forces from Camp Abu Naji in August, violence and assassinations have increased, echoing the sentiments of another close REO contact from Maysan (Ref A). Abu Hatem said that with the success of the Iranian-backed militias to drive out British forces from Camp Abu Naji, the militias have turned their attention to intimidating and assassinating independent members of the Maysan government along with members of the Sunni, Christian and Mandeian communities, sectarian violence previously unseen in Maysan. In addition, he said that Iran is funding assassination teams to foment instability in the province.

[¶3.](#) (C) Abu Hatem emphasized that Iraqi Security Forces would have to be "cleaned out" before PIC could be seriously considered. Abu Hatem said he met with the Minister of Interior, Jawad al-Boulani last week, and al-Boulani allegedly reported that that Chief of Police Ismail al-Majidi (Abu Maythem) was involved in smuggling goods and weapons across the border from Iran. Abu Hatem laughed off any assertion that the central government could ameliorate the violence in Maysan by saying that it could not even control the Green Zone

[¶4.](#) (C) Abu Hatem strongly urged that the United States throw its support to independent and moderate groups since they were the only hope for Iraq. Without more support, Abu Hatem said that Iran would use the militias to increase instability throughout the country. The only remedy to increased militia influence is more employment opportunities for Iraqi youth, Abu Hatem said. He estimated that 80 percent of militia members are

merely working for a paycheck

15. (C) Comment: Abu Hatem is the leader of the Noble Council in Maysan and has his own agenda, but he genuinely seems to value improving the lot of the average Iraqi. His reputation as the "Prince of the Marshes" during the Saddam regime makes him a popular figure, and the support he requested for independent political leaders obviously referred to him and the Noble Council. His view of Maysan's readiness for PIC coincides with the views of other REO contacts, as do his tales of increasing assassinations and Iranian influence. Abu Hatem could well be a viable counterweight to the current Sadr/JAM government and Badr-led security forces in Maysan. End comment.

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